

# Dek Unu Magazine

Solo Exhibitions of Fine  
Photoart Portfolios

September, 2018

Featured Artist

**Armineh Hovanesian**

"The realm of fantasies where  
life is created. I am free."

Cover "In Search of Identity"  
© Armineh Hovanesian



# Dek Unu Magazine

## Eleven

This is **Dek Unu Magazine**. In Esperanto, dek unu means "eleven." Eleven Images from a single artist. Eleven artists in eleven solo issues each year.

**Dek Unu** publishes the work of a new photoartist in each issue. The artist's work and words are featured alone and in individual focus as the sole purpose for each issue of the magazine. Unlike other arts and letters magazines which might look for work from a variety of artists to support an editorial staff's theme, at **Dek Unu**, theme and imagery are always each artist's own.

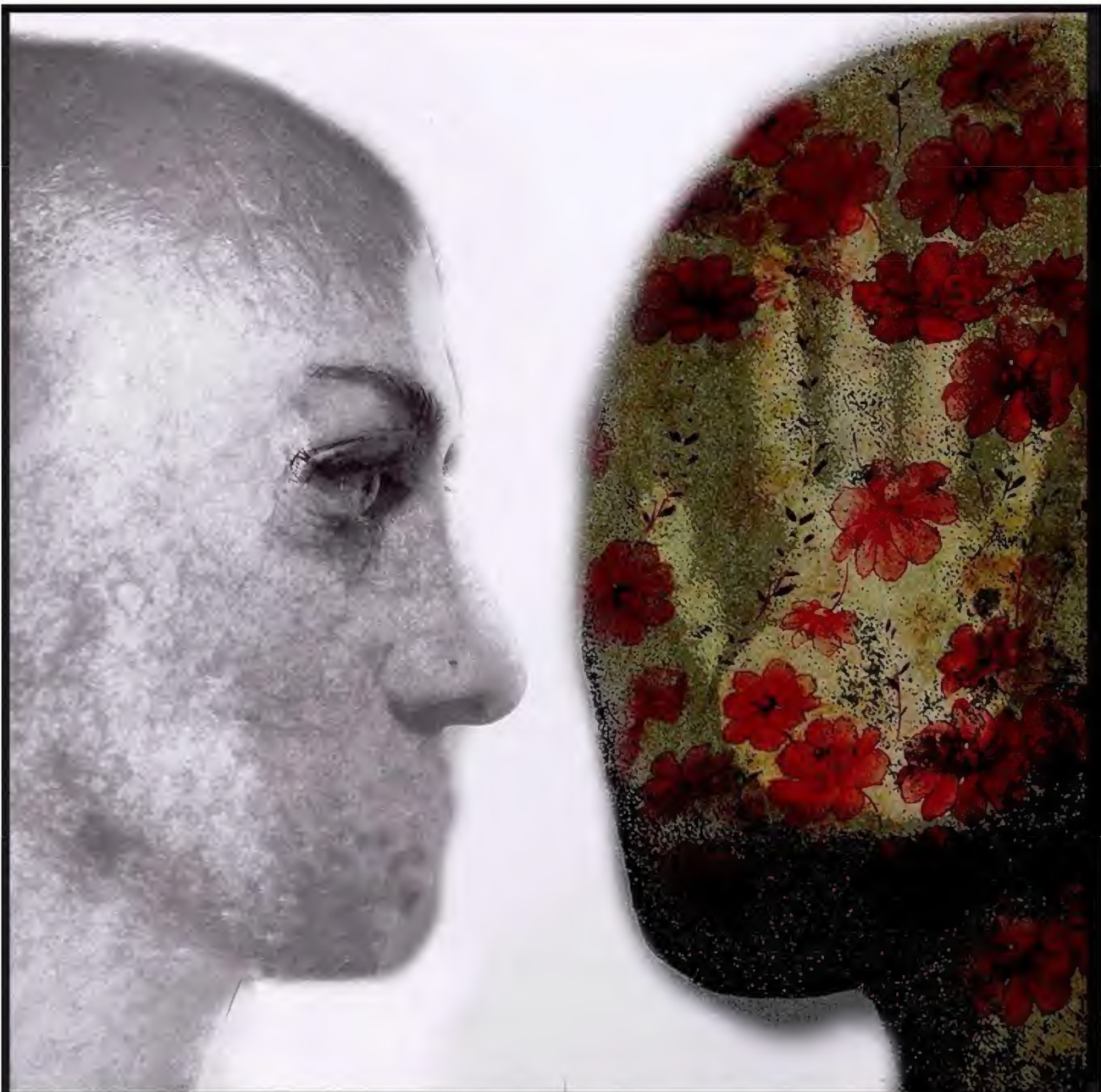
**Dek Unu** seeks challenging, complex work that focuses and intensifies perception from artists who demonstrate accomplished technical craft and mature aesthetic vision.

## This Month

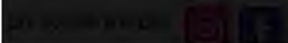
The first batch of touchscreen camera phones that could really compete with standard digital cameras appeared in 2009. Prior to that, lenses were limited, resolutions were sub-par, software was klunky, and many thought of the mobile phone as no proper tool for making serious art. Armineh Hovanesian began making serious art with hers in the same year, making her one of the first practitioners and pioneers in what later came to be called "iPhoneography."

Born in Paris, raised in Iran and Boston, with a two-year pause in Lisbon, today Armineh lives and works in Los Angeles and in the realm of surreal imagination. See her here....





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In Search of Identity

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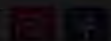


Salvador Meets Tin Type



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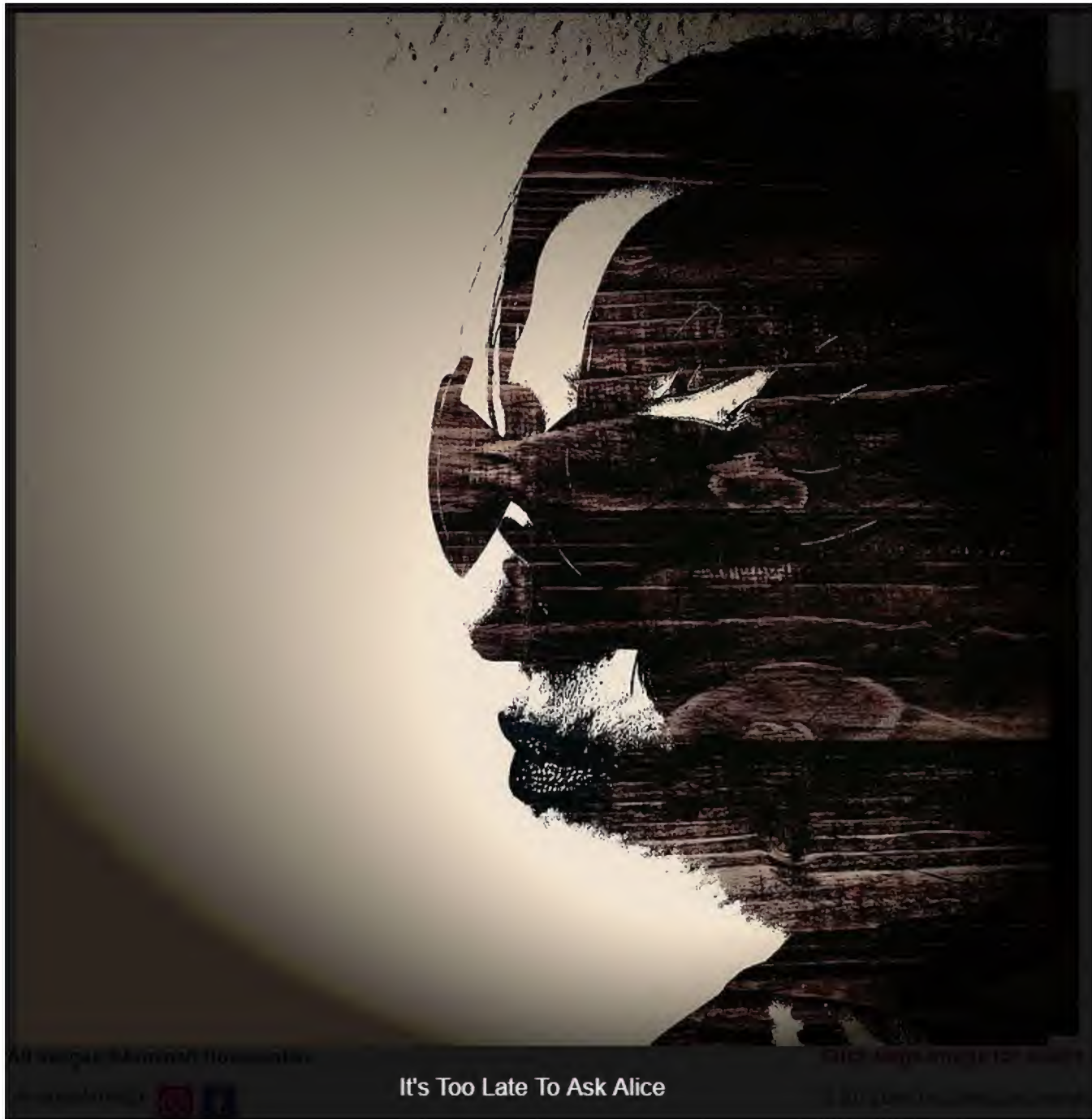
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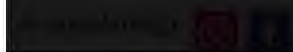
Channeling Man Ray

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It's Too Late To Ask Alice

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Watch Closely Now



Watch Closely Now

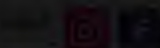
Watch Closely Now

Watch Closely Now



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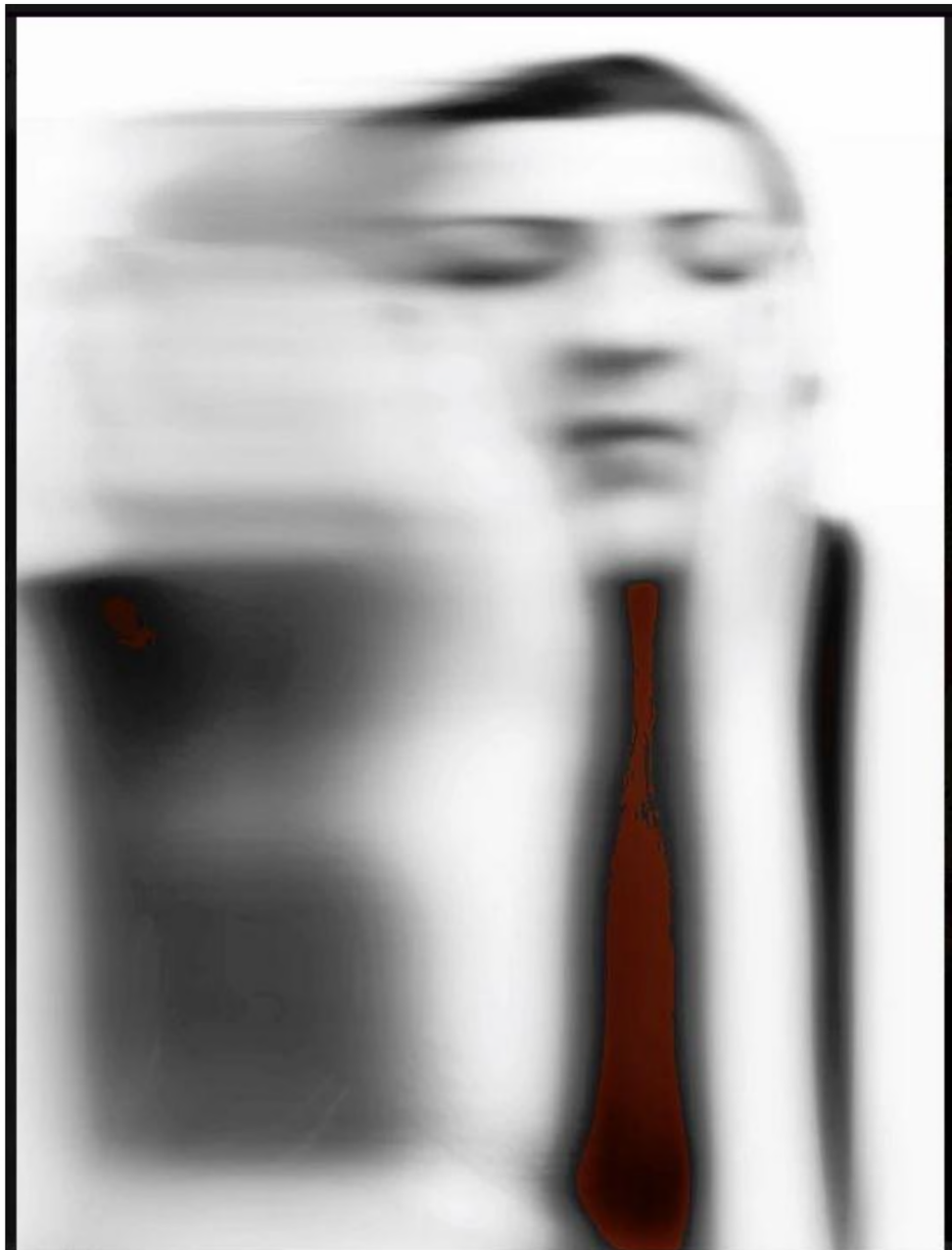
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Armineh Hovanesian

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Channeling Kiki

© 2018 Dek U



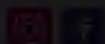
Cubism 1





Alamy.com - Acropolis, Greece

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Gracious Gaze

Click large image for full

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Mutation Metamorphosis



Elements of Vachag



## Artist Interview - Armineh Hovanesian

**You have been making art with the camera phone since touchscreen phones first appeared.**

I believe that art has always been, is, and will always be *The Revolutionary!* During these past 10 years I have seen people's perception shift from being a non-believer in mobile photography to slowly accepting and acknowledging this medium. There are still many traditional photographers and many artists who do not consider mobile photography and mobile art are valid forms of art making. Although there are, of course, specific galleries and websites solely for mobile photography and mobile art, I have been able to prove a lot of skeptics wrong by exhibiting and winning with images judged not as mobile photography but just as art. My first camera phone was an LG Xenon, with its 2 mpx camera. When I started to feel the potential of this device, I "upgraded" my phone and got an iPhone 3S (320x480, 3.1 mpx) in 2009. I am confident that next-generation smartphones are going to have even better camera lenses and features. I am glad to have participated in this "revolution" and to have helped this medium toward its deserving place in the art world.

**Unlike the countless "selfies" recorded daily, your self-portraits are original, well-crafted, and emotionally alive.**

All of the images in this portfolio are self-portraits. It is how I communicate feelings. Personal experience is an indispensable part of my creative process. My work process is linked to the given time I am working on a piece. What kind of day I have had, what the mood is at that very moment, where my thoughts are, and where my emotional level is on the pendulum of intensity. My psyche is the remnant of all experiences combined. My work captures a brief moment in time. The ephemeral, transitory, fleeting seconds we tend to forget.

**You have a gigantic catalog of works and an extensive exhibit and publication history! 16-hour days?**

It sure feels like I work 16 hours per day. I do have a full-time day job in an office which supports life and living however, my true passion is working on my photography and mobile art. I am wholeheartedly dedicated to what I do and give my 110%.

**You are not formally trained but you have the "eye" of a schooled artist. Explain?**

I wish I had a solid answer to this question. The love of photography and art has always been very prominent in my life; this love is deeply rooted in the very essence of my being. I would say that my experiences have played a role in helping me seeing the way I do! The "eye" behind the lens shoots a moment which resonates with his or her psychological narrative. We are all products of our past and the baggages we carry within. As a photographer, I look beyond the subject, if I have the luxury; that's when I may be able to see through the veil and capture a glimpse of the reality. My photographic brain is switched on all the time!

**Your piece, "Channeling Man Ray," connects to the famous surrealist photographer's solarized images. You must be a student of photo history?**

I'm always researching and reading about great photographers and studying their bodies of work. Man Ray is one of my main inspirations. I am also a great admirer of Henri Cartier-Bresson, Diane Arbus, Richard Alvedon, Yusuf Karsh, Robert Mapplethorpe, Sebastiao Salgado, Julia Margaret Cameron, Vivian Maier, Shirin Neshat, Ilse Bing, and Francesca Woodman.

**What about "Channeling Kiki?"**

Alice Ernestine Prin, nicknamed the Queen of Montparnasse, and often known as Kiki de Montparnasse, was a French artist's model, literary muse, nightclub singer, actress, memoirist, and painter in the 1920s. She was Man Ray's longtime lover and trusted artistic muse. I have always dreamt about living in Paris of 1920s. "Channeling Kiki" is my interpretation of this longing.





**Your image “Elements of Vachag” is part of a series that includes parts of the artist Vachag’s work. Tell about this collaboration and how it works?**

“Elements of Vachag” is a fusion work. It is a collaboration between a master artist, Vachag, and myself. Vachag was born in New Julfa in 1956, settled in Soviet Armenia in 1971, and moved to the United States in 1981. His art is influenced by the frescoes of the medieval churches of New Julfa, and the medieval churches, icons and sculptures of Armenia. What first attracted me to his work were the details, the emotions, the merging of past, present and future, the cultural roots, the colors and overall feeling of greatness. It only took one look and I was hypnotized and awe-struck.

For “Elements of Vachag” I have photographed portions of Vachag’s art and have fused it with my photography. Most of the pieces I have used are my face, facial features and hands. This is where Art meets iPhoneography. Our first book, also titled *Elements of Vachag*, is available on Blurb. We hope to have several volumes of this collaboration. I am so grateful to have Vachag in my life!

**Where are you from? Your identity story is unique.**

I was born in Paris, lived in Tehran, Boston, Lisbon, and Los Angeles, but I’m an American citizen and I’ve been in the United States most of my life. Call me an American with Armenian roots!

**Some artists are loners, others want a peer group. Are you part of any arts-interest collective? Support group? Gallery?**

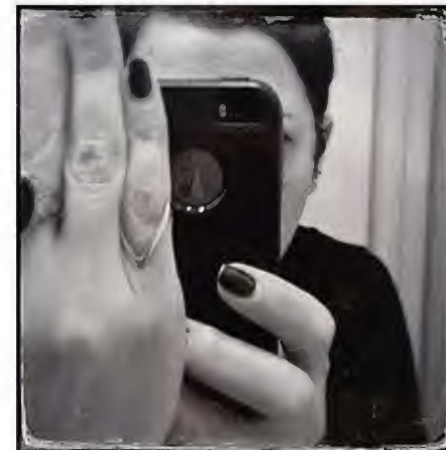
I am a loner to some degree; however, I am very fortunate to have an outstanding group of friends and colleagues throughout this on-going journey. I would like to publicly acknowledge: Nadine Benichou, Stephanie Dupont, and Leny Bagshop, at *Mobile Camera Club* in Paris, Manuela Matos Monteiro, at *MIRA Gallery* in Porto, Jane Schultz, of *IG Artistry* in Bryn Mawr, Joanne Carter, of *TheAppWhisperer* in London and Giulia Baita at *MAG Mobileartgroup* in Cagliari. They have been with me for years, are collaborators, supporters, and respected friends. I am a proud member of *The New Era Museum*, headed by Andrea Bigiarini in Florence, and the *She Loves Collective*, headed by Adrineh Baghdasarian in Los Angeles.

**You are an artist who works without a particular plan, working in abstraction, often in montage/collage. As you re-work an image, how do you tell when it finally “works?”**

The final image needs to look “whole” in my eyes. There are several works that have taken weeks to complete and some are finished in a matter of hours. It is somewhat difficult to explain in words. I am looking for a wholeness in my work, if that makes any sense. There have also been instances where I have completely deleted a piece after working on it for days. The piece itself talks to me. When there is no more room nor the need to add or take away anything, it is done.

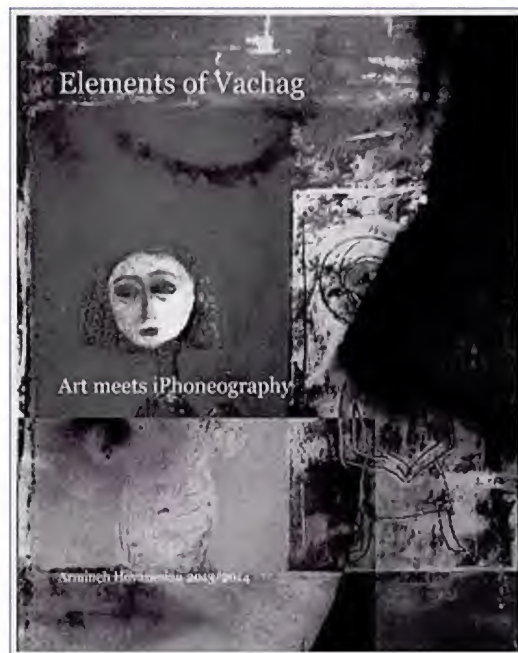
**What should we know about your equipment, software, and technique?**

I confess that at the moment 95% of my images are made with my iPhone 7 Plus. I also use a Sony ICLE 6000 camera from time to time. As for gadgets, I have a tripod which I do use from time to time and a photo light box set in storage! All of my edits are done on my iPhone or iPad using various applications. My top two favorite applications are: Snapseed and iColorama. I generally upgrade my iPhone every 2 years. When a new model is released, I prefer to wait and see what is the buzz within the community and then, I upgrade.





Thanks very much for sending your work to *Dek Unu*. We'll look for your current book at Blurb:



<http://www.blurb.com/books/5188884-elements-of-vachag>

### What's next? A new project? Travel? Show(s)? A book?

I do not have a specific new project in the works at the moment. I am truly excited to be working with a film camera. My cousin gave me his old Minolta camera and I'm looking forward to using it... when it comes back from repair! I am always ready and eager to travel. I am hopeful that great opportunities will knock on my door and I will be able to travel to faraway places for longer periods. As for shows, one of my *Elements of Vachag* pieces will be part of the *5th Biennial of Fine Art and Document Photography* in Barcelona from October 4 to October 21, 2018.

### Your links?

Website: [www.armineh-photography.com](http://www.armineh-photography.com)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/armineh-photography](https://www.facebook.com/armineh-photography)

Instagram: [www.instagram.com/armineh29](https://www.instagram.com/armineh29)

Instagram: [www.instagram.com/armineh\\_mobileart](https://www.instagram.com/armineh_mobileart)

Instagram: [www.instagram.com?armineh\\_sees\\_in\\_blackandwhite](https://www.instagram.com?armineh_sees_in_blackandwhite)

**You shared a quote from Vachag that seems like a good way to close this issue...**

*"Awareness of the past, that at least some of us remember faithfully... Awareness of the future, that at least some of us picture with hope... And finally, awareness of the present, the only truth of the instant, that is often clouded and far from us from the moment we were born. If the artist fails to become aware of the universal, he may immerse himself in the bland grayness of nostalgia and never attain the creative perfection of Art."*



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*Dek Unu Magazine*

1618 San Silvestro Drive

Venice, Florida, USA 34285

dekunumag [at] gmail [dot] com

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